

Approved For Release 2006/01/30 : CIA-RDP70B00338R000300090043-9

# Transcript of the President's News Conference

WASHINGTON, March 2—  
Following is a transcript of  
President Johnson's news con-  
ference as issued by the White  
House today:

## OPENING STATEMENT

I have a brief announce-  
ment to make. I have re-  
ceived a reply from Chairman  
[Aleksai N.] Kosygin to my  
letter of January 27. This  
reply confirmed the willing-  
ness of the Soviet Govern-  
ment to discuss means of  
limiting the arms race in of-  
fensive and defensive nuclear  
missiles.

This exchange of views is  
expected to lead to further  
discussions of this subject in  
Moscow and with our allies.  
It is my hope that a means  
can be found to achieve con-  
structive results.

I will be glad to take any  
questions in the time allotted  
to me.

## QUESTIONS

### 1. Missile Systems

Q. This applies, did I un-  
derstand correctly, to offen-  
sive weapons as well as the  
establishment of an anti-  
missile system?

A. Offensive and defensive.

Q. Mr. President, on what  
level will these discussions be?

A. They will be in Moscow  
with Ambassador [Llewellyn  
E.] Thompson. Then we will  
see how they progress.

Q. Mr. President, will these  
Moscow discussions be con-  
current with the ones going  
on in the 18-nation disarmam-  
ent conference going on in  
Geneva?

A. Not necessarily. They  
are not timed in connection  
with any other conferences.

As you know, I sent Chair-  
man Kosygin a letter and  
asked him to consider the  
desirability of an exchange of  
views in this regard. He has  
responded. We would assume  
that the discussions would be  
initiated with Ambassador  
Thompson. I wouldn't go fur-  
ther than that at this time.

### 2. U.S.-Soviet Relations

Q. Mr. President, do you  
see an interconnection be-  
tween Senate passage of the  
consular treaty, the space  
treaty, East-West trade, and  
a nonproliferation treaty? Do  
you see these as kind of one  
movement?

A. I think they are all  
very desirable moves in the  
national interest of the  
United States.

When I became President,  
one of the first steps I took  
in the first few weeks I was  
President was to communi-  
cate with Chairman Khrush-  
chev and suggest that we ex-  
plore together certain agree-  
ments that would be bene-  
ficial to both nations in pro-  
moting peace in the world.

Exchanges between our two  
countries resulted in: the  
signing of the civil air agree-  
ment; the signing of the  
new consular agreement, which  
devoutly hope will be ratified  
by the Senate, and about  
which I have had innumera-  
ble conversations with the  
leaders of this Congress of  
both parties; the progress  
that has been made in the



Pictorial Parade  
Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin

nonproliferation agreement,  
although we have not come  
to a complete meeting of the  
minds with all of the indi-  
viduals involved, we have  
made progress; the space  
agreement, which we hope the  
Senate will act favorably  
upon; the East-West trade  
which is being considered.

We have recommended all  
of those. We hope that the  
Congress will confirm our  
judgment that they are in the  
best interests of the United  
States. They were not made  
as a package move. They  
were made as individual rec-  
ommendations.

But I do think that what  
your question implies is:  
Does that reflect a policy on  
the part of this Government  
of attempting to find areas  
of agreement with the Soviet  
Union?

The answer is, yes. We are  
exploring, with every means  
at our command, every pos-  
sible way of relieving tensions  
in the world and promoting  
peace in the world.

### HOUSE ACTION ON POWELL

Q. Mr. President, do you  
have any reaction to the  
House action denying Mr.  
Adam Clayton Powell a seat?

A. No. I would have no  
comment on that matter, other  
than what you have been  
hearing in the news. I have  
approved for the members of the  
House that is reserved to  
them by the Constitution. The

President doesn't engage in  
internal affairs of the House  
or the Senate.

## Objectives

Q. Mr. President, Sir, the  
Prime Minister of North Viet-  
nam is quoted in a dispatch  
from Hanoi this morning  
saying there is no present  
possibility of talks and the  
N.L.F. [National Liberation  
Front] representative in Ha-  
noi is quoted in the same  
dispatch as saying now there  
is one way open to us to  
struggle until final victory.

In the light of these com-  
ments, could you comment on  
our objectives at this point?

A. We are in Vietnam be-  
cause of the violation of two  
solemn international agree-  
ments.

In 1954 Hanoi agreed that  
North Vietnam should not be  
used for the resumption of  
hostilities or to further an  
aggressive policy.

In 1962 Hanoi agreed to  
withdraw all of its military  
forces from Laos, to refrain  
from reintroducing such  
forces, and not to use the ter-  
ritory of Laos to interfere in  
the internal affairs of other  
countries.

If I had the time, I would  
go in some detail into the  
recommendations that General  
Maxwell Taylor made to Presi-  
dent Kennedy in his report of  
Nov. 3, 1961, after Hanoi had  
violated the Geneva declara-  
tion of 1954, but before the  
Geneva declaration of 1962  
was finally completed.

Referring to that report,  
General Taylor said, among  
other things, that his recom-  
mendation that he made at  
that time was not "the final  
word." Then he went on to  
add that it might be neces-  
sary to attack the sources of  
supply at their source if they  
continued to insist on aggres-  
sion.

We have made it abundantly  
clear that we were willing  
to have a complete ceasefire  
at any time they were willing  
to cease attack and cease ag-  
gression.

They have made it abun-  
dantly clear that they are  
not willing to do that, not-  
withstanding the "reports"  
that you refer to from time  
to time.

It is very clear to us that if  
they are going to bomb Pleiku  
as they did and kill our men  
in the middle of the night. If  
they are going to bomb Da-  
nang as they did just a few  
days ago, if they are going  
to lob their mortar shells into  
the backs of our soldiers as  
they did last night, you must,  
if you are at all fair to those  
men who are defending you  
there, permit them to respond.

They will respond, they are  
responding, and they will  
continue to respond, I believe,  
successfully.

I think that the American  
people should know that this  
is a question between their  
President, their country, their  
troops, and Mr. Ho Chi Minh  
and the troops he is sending  
in from the north. Every-  
one can take whatever side  
of the matter that he  
wants to.

As far as this Government  
is concerned, we have, from  
the very beginning, tried to  
keep our hand out and our  
guard up. We have tried to  
extend the hand of peace and  
say that we are willing to  
cease fire, for unconditional  
discussions, for four points,  
or 14 points, or any points,  
but if they were unwilling to  
do that and they insisted on  
carrying on their offensive,  
our men had to be in a posi-  
tion to respond.

## Missile Negotiations

Q. Mr. President, may I go  
back to your statement on  
the Soviet willingness to limit  
the arms race? Is it your un-  
derstanding from Chairman  
Kosygin's letter that they will  
now cease the construction of  
antiballistic missile systems  
while we discuss the problem?

A. My understanding of his  
letter is reflected in seven  
simple sentences. There will  
be a transcript available to  
you. I wouldn't go beyond  
that. I don't think there is  
any implication that is not  
made clear.

Q. If you have told us this,  
I missed it: Can you give us  
some idea as to when the  
conversations are going to  
start?

A. We don't have a date on  
that. It will be at a mutually  
satisfactory time. We will be  
very glad for them to start  
at the earliest possible date.

Q. Mr. President, can you  
give us the date on the Kosy-  
gin letter?

A. My letter was January  
27, and I don't have the date  
of his at the moment.

## 6. Warren Commission Report

Q. Mr. President, you ap-  
pointed the members of the  
Warren Commission, Sir. I  
believe at a news conference  
recently you said you saw no  
reason from stories that had  
been written to doubt the  
conclusions of the commission.

The District Attorney in  
New Orleans is attracting  
worldwide attention with  
statements now. First of all,  
he challenges the Warren Com-  
mission's conclusions and  
he does not want to cooperate.  
It appears, with the Federal  
Government in a case that  
involves a matter of very  
severe national importance.  
How do you feel about this?

A. I do not have any infor-  
mation from New Orleans,  
other than what I have seen in  
the newspapers. I would not  
have any comment to make  
with the limited information  
I have seen in the newspapers  
at this time. I know of no  
reason to change anything  
that I have said before.

## 7. Missiles

Q. Mr. President, Chairman  
Kosygin's letter refers to of-  
fensive and defensive nuclear

missiles. Did your letter go  
so far or was your proposal  
limited to defensive?

A. My letter was prompted  
by the desire to raise the  
question of defensive weapons.  
We had previously raised the  
question of offensive weapons.  
The Chairman's reply to us  
is agreeable to us. We are  
very glad to have the op-  
portunity to discuss both, as  
we had indicated previously,  
although not in the same  
channels.

Q. Mr. President, was your  
January 27 letter prompted  
primarily by the Soviet anti-  
missile system being deployed  
around Moscow, the one you  
mentioned recently?

A. The January 27 letter  
was prompted by two pri-  
mary reasons. First, the de-  
sire to have a discussion in-  
volving the limitation of arms,  
whenever possible, that  
might lead to an agreement.  
We are constantly pursuing  
any courses that might lead  
to an agreement that would  
be in the interest of the  
people of the world.

Second, before reaching a  
final decision on the course  
this Government would follow  
in connection with a defensive  
system, I think we would like  
to explore an agreement.

In any event, we would like  
to have some discussions and  
be sure we couldn't get an  
agreement before we made a  
very basic decision that was  
far-reaching, comprehensive,  
and one on which we could  
not turn back.

Q. Mr. President, during  
the discussion, what will be  
the status of the research and  
development on the antibal-  
listic missile? Will it continue  
or be suspended?

A. I assume both countries  
will continue with whatever  
efforts they think desirable.  
I would see no reason for us  
to suspend work that we have  
under way.

Q. Mr. President, I didn't  
understand what you said  
earlier, referring to six sen-  
tences about the transcript.  
Could we have the texts of  
the exchange of the two  
leaders?

A. I think at this time I  
will limit you to my state-  
ment on the subject. That will  
be in the transcript. I will  
read it again, if you have time  
and if I have the time. If not,  
it will be in the transcript.

Q. Sir, can you tell us ex-  
actly when you received the  
letter? A. I don't have that.

Q. Not when it was dated,  
when you received it? A. I  
don't have the date of the  
letter or the time it was re-  
ceived.

Q. Mr. President, is there  
any possibility of your and  
Mr. Kosygin meeting in the  
near future?

A. I see nothing in this that  
would indicate that now.

Thank you, Mr. President.

NEW YORK TIMES 3 MAR 67

Approved For Release 2006/01/30 : CIA-RDP70B00338R000300090043-9

## Foreign Affairs: Again the Mighty Atom

By C. L. SULZBERGER

GENEVA—Whether or not Washington and Moscow can convince their friends to sign a nuclear limitation treaty, negotiations seeking this goal mark dramatic switches in both American and Soviet policy. Each superpower is patently prepared to scrap past concepts.

This reversed approach has set off furious anti-Russian tirades in China while igniting suspicion of America in the West. German, Italian and Japanese pique with us causes disgruntled Americans to murmur: "Is the Axis trying to emerge again?" Such reactions scarcely soothe our worried partners.

### Broad Significance

The treaty text accepted by Washington to insure against further spread of nuclear weapons has massive implications. We are back to the Baruch plan which sought to limit atomic arms when only the U.S.A. possessed them and when even Bertrand Russell urged us to warn transgressors we could blow them off the map. But today there are five atomic military powers. If this treaty isn't signed there will soon be eight, then ten.

In a final effort to limit the nuclear club, we formally scrap

our proposed NATO multilateral nuclear force (M.L.F.) while also making certain that any European nuclear force remains only a dream. Moreover, we guarantee that no matter what Russia and America decide about anti-missile defenses, Europe will be excluded from such projects. Defense against incoming missiles relies upon nuclear warheads which would be banned from non-possessors.

M.L.F., of course, never stood a chance despite the ardor of its advocates, and was long since dead if not buried. Nor does the proposed treaty technically ban a European nuclear force because a confederated Europe with one defense authority might theoretically inherit existing French or British stockpiles. But France has no disposition to pool atomic weapons and opposes integrated Europe. The idea is a non-starter.

### The A.B.M. Race

Finally, West Europe could never enter an anti-ballistic missile (A.B.M.) race because it couldn't finance it. The huge cost of such systems makes both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. consider whether an A.B.M. network is worth while. The treaty would ban transferral of nuclear warheads to other nations—either for offensive or defen-

sive purposes, and West Europe couldn't mount an A.B.M. program on its own, even if Britain and France pitched in together. The treaty thus ratifies Khrushchev's description of European NATO members as Russia's "hostages."

We can hardly blame our allies for grumbling when they realize the full implications of an American policy that condemns them to permanent dependence. Resentment may be unrealistic; a bantamweight pugilist is smaller and weaker than a heavyweight, and shouldn't logically complain. Nevertheless, no nation likes to be frozen into subservience.

Moscow, as well as Washington, has shifted fundamental policy, but Russia has less trouble with its bloc—except for China. Indeed, when the "cultural revolution" and anti-Soviet campaign developed last summer, Moscow changed its nuclear diplomacy. It had been interested only in a treaty that would prevent Germany from getting nuclear weapons; now it shows equal interest in keeping Asia's atomic *status quo*.

Washington and Moscow show increasing parallelism on nuclear questions. They indicate a curb on weapons production can be envisioned after an anti-proliferation treaty. Even without France and China, such a

treaty could bring pressure on violators through economic sanctions. Furthermore, the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. contemplate asking U.N. to authorize assistance to any non-nuclear signatory facing atomic threats.

All this is immensely complicated and there is little chance of imminent agreement. Nevertheless, while negotiations take place, Russia mutes its hostility to U.S. actions in Vietnam, while we try to corral reluctant allies, above all West Germany, into accepting a nuclear freeze. The Soviet attitude, of course, inspires China's rage; the American attitude alarms certain of our allies.

### Worth the Candle

An obvious calculation in both Washington and Moscow is that the game is worth the treaty candle, but again one sees the splitting power of the atom. It has helped divide the Sino-Soviet bloc and it has helped fragment the West, once more opening fresh wounds.

Nonetheless, a stunning diplomatic goal is already discernible through the confusion. This goal is some kind of vague and ultimate alliance, above existing blocs, enabling the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., despite mutual suspicions, to join and police the world.

Approved For Release 2006/01/30 : CIA-RDP70B00338R000300090043-9